March 1974; (4) Air Services in September 1991; (5) Standby credit to the Royal Government of Bhutan in March 1993, and (6) Indo-Bhutan Survey Collooorat.on Projects in March 1996.

Agreements have also been signed between the two countries in respect of the following major projects being currently set up in Bhutan:—

(i) Tala Hydro-electric Project (1020 MW): A bilateral Agreement for thhis Project between Government of India and Government of Bhutan was signed in March 1996.

(ii) Kurichu Hydro-electric Project (45 MW): The bilateral Agreement for this Project was signed in February 1994.

(iii) Dungsum Cement Plant (capacity 0.5 million tons per year). The Bilateral Agreement for the setting up of the Dungsum cement plant was signed in March 1996.

(c) India enjoys a close and trouble free relationship with Bhutan characterised by regular exchanges of visits at various levels and economic corporation in a wide range of sectors, to mutual benefit.

Possibilities of India becoming a permanent member of Security Council

2502. SHRI TARA CHARAN MAJUMDAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether possibilities of India's efforts to become a permanent member of the all-powerful Security Council at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly, to be held in September, 1997 are certain;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to adopt all possible strategies to tackle conspiring moves of our neighbours and other member countries of U.N.O.; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) to (d) Discussions on UN Security Council reform, including the expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent members, are continuing. The mandate of the Open Ended Working Group set up by the UN General Assembly has been extended by another year, so as to enable, it to submit its report, including "any agreed recommendations" by the end of the 52nd Session of the UN General Assembly. The Government keeps the situation under constant review, taking into account the positions adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, the various other proposals under consideration and the evolving scenario. We have underscored the need for a non-discriminatory approach in the selection of new permanent members and adoption of global criteria for their selection.

India's Representation in Security Council

2503. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Security Council proposes to elect five Permanent Members, with a view to broadening the representation of the developing world;

(b) whether India is one of the strongest nations in the developing world; and

(c) if so, the efforts made by the Government to represent Asia in the Security Council as a Permanent Member?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) to (c) Discussions on UN Security Council reform, including the expansion in the number of permanent and non-permanent members are continuing. A number of proposals are under consideration, the

a leading developing country, India has put forward her candidature for permanent membership and has been participating actively in the deliberations of the Open Ended Working Group set up by the UN General Assembly. The mandate of the Open Ended Working Group has been extended by another year, so as to enable it to submit its report, including "any agreed recommendations", by the end of the 52nd session of the UN General Assembly. India believes that the selection of new permanent members should be done on global rather than on regional basis, on well-established global criteria and on a non-discrimanatory basis.

Discussion on POW issuse in Indo-Pak Talks

2504. SHRI VISHNU KANT SHASTRI
SHRIMATI ANANDI-BEN JETHABHAI PATIL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that quite a large number of Indian soldiers of 1971 war captured by Pakistan are languishing in Pakistani jails, if so, the number of such POWs;

(b) the reasons for not including such soldiers in the POW exchange deal with that country;

(c) whether this matter was discussed with Pakistan in the last Indo-Pak talks held recently in Delhi and Islamabad; if so, what was the outcome thereof; if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government would take up this issue with the Pakistan Government during the next round of talks; if not, how Government propose to get them released at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) and (b): During the 1971 war, 532 Indian soldiers were taken prisoners of war by Pakistan. All these soldiers have been repatriated to India. Subsequently Government were informed about the 54 missing Indian soldiers. Their cases were taken up with the Government of Pakistan as and when they were brought to Government's notice. Government of Pakistan maintains that there are no such Indian defence personnel in its custody.

(c) and (d) The issue of Indian Prisoners of War (POWs) in Pakistan custody was taken up at the recent bilateral exchanges. Government would continue to pursue the matter with the Government of Pakistan.

Orientation to the Officers in Commercial wings of Indian Missions

2505. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item in The Times of India, dated the 2nd July, 1997, entitled "Missions abroad told to focus on trade, tourism";

(b) whether the officers posted in the commercial wings of Indian Missions abroad are given suitable business orientation to handle trade and commerce practices;

(c) if so, the details of such training, etc. and how are these officers selected while posting;

(d) whether any cases of inept handling of business proposals by the Indian Mission Officials have come to notice; and

(e) if so, the remidial steps taken to make the officers more responsive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) Yes, Sir.